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## NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

### BOTANY.

THE TERTIARY FLORA OF BROGNON.—Mr. Saporta communicated recently to the Geological Society of France a paper on the flora of a small tertiary basin, at Brognon, north-east of Dijon, in the department de la Cote d'Or, the following abstract of which is from *L'Institut* of July 25:—"The vegetable remains are referable to 13 species of 12 genera, which are *Flabellaria*, *Quercus* (2), *Migrica*, *Ficus*, *Cinnamomum*, *Andromeda*, *Acer*, *Ilex*, *Zizyphus*, *Xanthoxylon*, *Cercis*, *Pecopteris*. The last genus is allied to two ferns, living in the Brazils and at the Cape; the two oakes have their analogues in Louisiana and Guatemala; the fig has its in Eastern India and in Java, *Cercis* and *Cinnamomum* ally this flora to that of Japan; the jujube to that of Timor; *Andromeda* to that of the Isle Maurice. The maple and the holly still live in the Mediterranean region. Floras of a like character are found preserved at Armissan, Manosque, Monod, Cœningen, in the 'gypses d'Aix,' and in the Swiss 'Molasse.'"

The author concludes as follows:

1st. That during the period when the flora of Brognon flourished, there was in this locality a fresh water lake, very rich in calcareous sediments by the agency of which the remains of plants living on the margins of the lake have been preserved.

2nd. That the age of the lake may be determined by comparison with analogous deposits; it should probably be placed in the Lower Miocene.

3rd. That this flora consists of a mixture of tropical and temperate forms, and such that characterize the plateaus of Mexico and Central America; and that the temperature of Europe, during the Miocene epoch, was similar to these regions.—*R. Tate, Hardwicke's Scientific Gossip, Oct. 1, 1866.*

DRYING FLOWERS BY HEAT.—Twenty years ago, when botany was my hobby, I adopted a plan for drying my specimens, which was both rapid and very effectual in preserving colours. I borrowed a tin dripping pan from the cook, which was just the size of my sheets of blotting-paper. In this I laid the produce of the day's excursion between sheets of blotting-paper in the usual way, and when the pile was complete I covered it over with a layer of common scouring sand half an inch thick, so that the tin dish appeared to be simply full of sand. I then placed it on the kitchen fender, or on the hob, or in the oven if it were not too hot, and in three or four hours the whole batch of specimens was perfectly dried. It required a little care to take them out at the right moment, when they were baked just enough, and not too much; but this care being given, the success of the plan was perfect. Many specimens still in my herbarium bear witness to the superiority of such rapid drying over the old method.—*F. T. M. Loborough.*

*Another Method.*—"I have adopted the plan of drying flowers by heat for some years, on the recommendation of a friend. With some plants

it acts very well, but not with others. Much depends on the mode of doing it. It should be done *gradually*, and with an iron *not too hot*. My friend told me that he had taken nearly two hours in thus drying a plant, but he found himself well rewarded. I have *Orchis fusca* now that I ironed out in 1863, and it has lost very little of its colour. *Ophrys muscifera* looks well ironed; so do grasses."—*Henry Utlyett. Hardwicke's Scientific Gossip, Aug. 1, 1866.*

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### ZOOLOGY.

**FLIGHTS OF BUTTERFLIES.**—In Europe, we have had notices of remarkable flights of swarms of butterflies; but Sir Emerson Tennent, in his work on the Natural History of Ceylon, has related similar instances of "flights of these delicate creatures, generally of a white or pale yellow hue, apparently miles in breadth, and of such prodigious extension as to occupy hours and even days, uninterruptedly in their passage":—

"The butterflies I have seen in these wonderful migrations, in Ceylon, were mostly *Calidryas hilaria*, *C. Alcmeone* and *C. Pyranthe*, with straggling individuals of the genus *Eupatæa*, *E. Coras* and *E. Prothoe*. Their passage took place in April or May, generally in a north-easterly direction. A friend of mine travelling from Kandy to Kornegalle, drove for nine miles through a cloud of white butterflies, which were passing across the road by which he went." p. 403.

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### GEOLOGY.

**THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF MAN ON OUR PLANET.**—"Although perhaps more interesting in an ethnological than in a geological point of view, we cannot altogether exclude from our notice the phenomena attending the first appearance of Man on our planet. The discoveries of the last few years have satisfactorily shown that the opinions formerly entertained of a great break existing between the period when the now extinct races of Mammalia dwelt in our land, and the first creation of man, are no longer tenable. Here also we have been obliged to give up the theory of great breaks between successive formations. As we find a gradual passage from one geological formation to another evidenced by the *gradual* dying out of the pre-existing forms of animal life, and the *gradual* introduction of newer, and generally higher, forms (although we do not yet understand the law of such progressive changes), so, when we come to the most recent, or Quaternary, periods in geological chronology, we find evidence of Man's existence on the earth before the final disappearance of those varied forms of mammalian life which have hitherto been generally looked upon as belonging to the final period of the geological cycle. Thus Man of the present day is connected by an almost unbroken series of links with